



The umbrella organization  
for the safety and health of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

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P.O. Box 5361, Fort McMurray, Alberta, T9H 3G4  
Phone: (780) 715-9374 Fax: (780) 791-7415 Email: [pepsolutions@shaw.ca](mailto:pepsolutions@shaw.ca)

November 25, 2005

Moa Sundstrom, Coordinator  
WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion  
Karolinska Institutet  
Department of Public Health Sciences, Division of Social Medicine

Dear Moa;

Please accept this revised application report for the re-designation of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo reflecting the clarifications you requested relating to Indicators #3 and #4. After the support I received from Kathy Belton with the Alberta Centre For Injury Control And Research, I am confident this report will be satisfactory for you.

We look forward to maintaining our status as a designated WHO Safe Community and in being a part of the International network of Safe Communities.

Should you have any further questions, please contact me by email at [pepsolutions@shaw.ca](mailto:pepsolutions@shaw.ca).

Yours for a safer community,

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Nancy Stammers, Coordinator  
Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network

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Judy Corcoran, Chair  
Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network

# Application for Renewed Certification as a WHO Safe Community

Modified November 2005

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is located in northeastern Alberta. It was established on April 1, 1995 when the City of Fort McMurray and Improvement District No. 143 amalgamated to form the largest regional municipality in North America with an area of 68,454 square kilometers. Fort McMurray is at the center of this dynamic region. It is the largest community within the municipality. Other communities within the municipality include Anzac, Conklin, Draper, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Fitzgerald, Fort MacKay, Gregoire Lake Estates, Janvier, Mariana Lake, and Saprae Creek Estates. These communities offer unique lifestyles.

\* Information gathered for this section of the report is acquired from the 2005 Municipal Census.

### **History:**

Fort McMurray was originally a fur-trading town, with many of its' people employed on the barges that use to take supplies into the north. It evolved very quickly from a village of log cabins and false front buildings into a real city, and Canada's leading supplier of crude oil.

Fort McMurray is the world centre for oil sands development. The city is located in an area that contains more recoverable oil than all of the Middle East. The 1950's brought hope to the oil sands and several companies started investigating the potential of the oil sands. In 1964, approval was granted to Great Canadian Oil Sands Company (now Suncor Energy Inc.) for the first oil sands project that officially began production in 1967. A few years later, Syncrude Canada Ltd., a joint public-private venture was formed and Syncrude Canada Ltd. began construction on a much larger site that came online in 1978.

Since then, the development of the oil sands has exploded. An example of the area's population growth is reflected in the community of Fort McMurray, located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Fort McMurray has grown from a small town of 300 in 1900 to a thriving city with a population of over 50,000 people today. Industry investment in oil sands development now totals \$23 billion with \$7 billion worth of projects under construction and \$30 billion of projects have been forecasted for completion by 2012.

### **Today:**

Fort McMurray is a thriving community with a great many services and amenities striving to meet the needs of the residents who live here. The population continues to grow, and with it the increasing demand for services, recreation facilities, education, and health care.

This imposes unique challenges in promoting and sustaining a safe and healthy community. Geographically, Fort McMurray is isolated from the rest of the Province. It is demographically unusual with a younger than average population with wages often higher than the rest of the Province and most of Canada. Fort McMurray residents work hard and play hard.

### **Population:**

The 2005 census results reveal a total population of 73,176 for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. This figure represents an increase of 6,071 residents or 9.0 per cent since the municipal census in 2004. A shadow population of 11,779 is included in the total figure and includes residents who reside in rural work camps, urban campgrounds and residents who have lived in a hotel in Fort McMurray for a minimum of 15 days and are employed by an industrial or commercial establishment in the municipality.

Of this new total, 60,983 reside in the urban service area for an 8.7 per cent increase in Fort McMurray since last year.

Population in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo by Area:

Area	1999	2000	2002	2004	2005
Anzac	397	446	548	647	685
Conklin	215	219	213	210	242
Draper	47	60	84	141	148
Fort Chipewyan	1,020	1,036	1,012	1,146	744
Fort Fitzgerald*			30	4	12
Fort MacKay	262	399	186	218	104
Fort McMurray	36,452	42,156	47,240	56,111	60,983
Gregoire Lake Estates	163	206	184	206	180
Hinterland*		122			
Janvier	207	185	143	112	141
Mariana Lake	7	15	11	8	5
Saprae Creek	509	659	603	624	754
Work Camps**	3,568	5,903	8,063	7,678	9,178
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,847</b>	<b>51,406</b>	<b>58,317</b>	<b>67,105</b>	<b>73,176</b>

\* Fort Fitzgerald was not enumerated in the 1999 and 2000 municipal census and the Hinterland population was enumerated in the 2000 municipal census only.

\*\* Work camps house oil sands workers and contract employees in the rural areas of the region.

There is a greater percent of males (53.8) than females (46.2) in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Further analysis reveals that there are a greater percent of males than females in all regions. There is a greater percent of males (55.8) than females (44.2) in Fort McMurray. Further analysis reveals that the difference between females and males is greatest in Fort McMurray.

**Age Distribution:**

The average age of residents in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is 31.0 years, up from 30.3 years in 2004. The average age for males, 31.6 years, is higher than females, 30.2 years. The average age of male residents in Fort McMurray (31.8 years) is greater than the average age of males living in the rural communities (30.4 years). The difference is not as great for females (30.1 versus 30.0 years respectively). Percent Residents by Age in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo:

Age Group*	2000	2002	2004	2005
0-4	7.3	7.1	7.4	7.1
5-9	8.8	7.8	7.5	7.3
10-14	9.3	8.6	8.6	7.2
15-19	9.2	8.3	8.2	7.6
20-24	7.3	8.5	7.9	8.3
25-29	7.8	8.7	8.3	9.0
30-34	8.4	8.8	8.3	9.1
35-39	9.8	9.0	8.9	8.6
40-44	10.4	10.2	10.1	9.6
45-49	8.6	9.1	9.5	9.9
50-54	6.6	6.9	7.5	8.0
55-59	3.3	3.8	4.3	4.7
60-64	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.9
65-69	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
70-74	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
75-79	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
80-84	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
85+	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* This data was not computed in the 1999 municipal census.

The average age of residents in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is 31.0 years, up from 30.3 years in 2004. The average age for males, 31.6 years, is higher than females, 30.2 years. The average age of male residents in Fort McMurray (31.8 years) is greater than the average age of males living in the rural communities (30.4 years). The difference is not as great for females (30.1 versus 30.0 years respectively).

## Employment:

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo’s labor force has a consistent high rate of participation. The region continues to experience significant new growth in the oil sands industry. As a percentage of the total population, 14 years of age and older, the workforce has increased to 87.2 percent in 2005, up from 73.6 percent in 2004.

Percent of Workforce Employed by Types of Companies:

Type of Employment	Fort McMurray	Rural Communities	RMWB <sup>+</sup>
Oil Company*	31.2	19.8	47.7
Contractor for Oil Company*	20.3	10.6	14.8
Construction	6.5	6.9	4.9
Service / Retail	21.4	14.3	15.8
Government**	3.4	6.6	2.7
Education	5.0	8.5	3.9
Health Care	3.8	3.7	2.9
Other	8.5	29.5	7.4
Total	100	100	100

\* Oil Company includes oil sands, oil, gas, pipeline, and COGEN.

\*\* Government includes municipal, provincial, and federal.

<sup>+</sup> Includes employees from work camps.

Of all residents of the region who indicated they were employed, the largest number indicated that they worked for an oil company and, in total, 62.5 percent indicated they worked for an oil-related company or for a company that contracted in the oil sector. The pattern of types of employment was quite similar for urban and rural areas with the exception of a higher other classification in the rural communities.

## The Culture:

A diverse cosmopolitan population has found a “home away from home” here in The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. It is this global representation that contributes to the cultural richness of the region. While an indigenous population of Chipewyan and Beaver are native to the Athabasca region, by the 1870s the Cree, Metis and Euro-Canadians also made their homes here. Today the diversity of culture in the region is both recognized and celebrated.

- The McMurray Newfoundlanders Club features members with Newfoundland/Labrador ancestry
- Association Canadienne Française de l’Alberta, dedicated to preserving French Canadian culture
- Other active groups: Chinese Canadian Culture Association, Filipino Canadian Association
- The most northern mosque in the world was constructed here by Markas-Ul Islam Congregation
- Nistawoyou Friendship Centre enriches the past, present, and future of the Aboriginal community
- Metis Nation with six Local Councils guide and support the Metis people of this region

Of residents enumerated in the rural communities of Wood Buffalo, 47.3 percent of females and 45.4 percent of males indicated they were of Aboriginal heritage. This percentage is highly variable depending upon the community. Of residents enumerated in Fort McMurray, 10.3 percent of females and 8.7 percent of males indicated they were of Aboriginal heritage. This data was based on self-disclosure.

## THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO- A SAFE COMMUNITY

### **Background:**

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network is a non-profit, community-based organization committed to promoting a safe and healthy lifestyle in the workplace, at home and at play.

The concept of becoming a Safe Community was initially conceived in April 1991 by the University of Alberta, Northern Alberta Health and Safety Resource Centre and was funded by the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program.

The objective was to:

- Educate workers and the general public about occupational illnesses, potential hazards, hazard evaluation, control and prevention.
- Focus on work habits, personal habits, injury awareness, protective measures and aids, cost associated benefits, lifestyle and behavior change.
- While working collectively to improve quality of work, recreation and life.

An evaluation questionnaire was developed in order to have a baseline guide of current perceptions, behavior, work site and off job health and safety practices, demographics, etc. Safetysaurus, the mascot was introduced.

In 1992, City Council moved that this was a timely and worthwhile project. Representative's of the major employers, school boards, municipality, service groups, hospital, health unit, RCMP, fire department and Keyano College Lifestyles formed a steering committee chaired by a local Community Coordinator hired by the University of Alberta.

Fort McMurray hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Safe Communities in June 1995. During the conference, on June 6, 1995, Fort McMurray was designated a Safe Community with the World Health Organization. This was the 12<sup>th</sup> designation in the world, and the first in North America.

Over the past 10 years, many of the stakeholders and partners have continued their efforts towards a safer and healthier community. Taking into account the uniqueness of our community and the ever changing demographics, new stakeholders and partners have come on board with a renewed spirit, and the desire to fulfill the initial Safe Community Agreement. It states:

*'To implement an ongoing programme of injury control to cover the whole community including people of all age groups, all environments and all situations. The parties agree to document and evaluate their efforts and to actively spread their experiences nationally and internationally.'*

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SAFETY PROMOTION ACTIVITIES  
RELATED TO THE 6 SAFE COMMUNITY INDICATORS**

**#1 An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community.**

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network has a mandate to become the regional coordinating entity for various groups, organizations and business promoting safety and wellness. Partnership and collaboration has been the key to success over the past 10 years, and will continue to be as we strive towards a safer and healthier community. By working together we avoid duplication and strengthen resources. Flexibility is crucial in this ever- changing community. Often initiatives need to be adjusted to meet the changing needs of our community.

The Purpose: To promote a community culture of safety and well-being by addressing occupational, community, and lifestyle issues through partnerships of individuals and organizations, and through communication and coordination of resources.

The Vision: To be safe and healthy in all we do.

The Goals: 

1. To develop a strong and growing Network.
2. To become the umbrella organization for the safety and health of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
3. To promote safe and healthy living 24/7.

The Beliefs: 

1. Injuries are NOT “accidents”, but are predictable and preventable.
2. Health and safety can be achieved.
3. A multi-sectoral approach is required to reduce injuries and improve population health.
4. Tremendous potential for synergy exists when health and safety organizations, corporations, government, advocacy and community agencies work together to prevent injuries and promote wellness.

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network is a registered non-profit organization. As with many non-profit groups, one of the most significant challenges the Network faces is to secure funds to implement safety and health initiatives. Funding is dependent on community partners, fundraising initiatives, and federal and provincial grants.

Until this past year, the Network employed one part time Facilitator/ Coordinator. However, in acknowledging the challenges of our community, the increased level of need to provide resources and support to community initiatives, and the time commitment necessary to address these identifiers, the Coordinator now has the flexible hours of working ‘up to’ full time.

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network consists of partners representing industry, health care, local and provincial government, small business, media, education, RCMP, Fire Prevention, and the community at large. The Network continues to recruit potential partners who share the goals and objectives.

Member agencies, invited guests, and the community at large are encouraged to attend monthly meetings of the WBSHCN (currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 9-10:30am). During the meetings, information and updates are shared, topics of specific interest as identified by the membership are presented, reports from the Executive and from the Coordinator are given, as well as discussions, planning and evaluation of initiatives.

Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network includes membership from a variety of community organizations and business. Ongoing recruitment of stakeholders, volunteers and concerned persons ensures a consistently updated representation from our Municipality. To date, our partners include:

- Albian Sands
- Alberta Motor Association
- CJOK/ KYX 98 Radio
- Fort MacKay Wellness Centre
- Fort McMurray Today
- Nexen Inc.
- NLHR, Health Promotion
- RMWB, Fire Prevention
- Safety Builders North Inc.
- Suncor Energy Inc.
- Tridon Communication
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Alberta Brain Injury Network
- Canadian Society Safety Engineers
- Communities In Bloom
- FM Catholic School District
- Golosky Trucking
- NLHR, Physiotherapy Department
- NLHR, Childhood Injury Prevention
- RMWB, Community Services
- St. John Ambulance
- Syncrude Canada
- WB Human Resources Association
- RCMP
- Alberta Construction Safety Ass.
- City Centre Business Revitalization
- Community Members at Large
- FM Public School District
- Keyano College
- NLHR, Emergency Department
- NLHR Parent Child Resources
- RMWB, Emergency Services
- SOS/ Some Other Solutions
- TransWest Mining Systems
- Workers Compensation Board

Sub-committees of the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network exist to deal with specific issues and promotion:

- The Childhood Injury Prevention Taskforce
- Traffic Safety Taskforce
- Substance Abuse Taskforce (to be launched in 2006)
- Workplace Health and Safety Taskforce (to be launched 2006)

An Executive governs the WBSHCN with 1 Chairperson, 1 Treasurer/ Secretary, and 4 Directors. The current Executive consists of representatives from the Northern Lights Health Region (Injury Prevention and Wellness), RCMP, Municipal Government (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo), Workplace Health and Safety, Business, and major industry (Syncrude Canada). Monthly meetings are held with the Coordinator in attendance. The focus of discussions is business oriented: goal planning, budget and finance, development of programs and initiatives, membership recruitment, Funder recruitment, policy building, advertising and promotions. An Annual General Meeting takes place yearly to provide information and updates to the community, elect a new Executive, review financial report, and present any future initiatives.

The Network is a registered non-profit organization that depends on community partners, fundraising initiatives, and federal and provincial grants for funding. Until just recently, the Network employed one part time Coordinator. However, in realizing the challenges of our community, the high level of need to provide resources and support to community initiatives, and the time commitment necessary to fulfill these identifiers, the Coordinator now has the flexible hours of working 'up to' full time.

## **#2 Long-term, sustainable programs covering both genders and all ages, environments, and situations.**

Many of the long-term sustainable programs are pre-determined by funding availability and restrictions. This past year has been the most successful in securing funds which directly impacts initiatives, resources, and related administration costs. This has helped to provide more sustainability in pursuit of the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network goals.

The partnership and collaborating efforts demonstrate by community organizations, business, levels of government and the community at large demonstrates the support and commitment within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in working towards a sustainable safer and healthier community.

### Initiatives for Children 0-14 years:

- A Million Messages- A comprehensive plan to standardize injury prevention messages given to parents at pre-existing contacts with health professionals. Messages given by Public Health Nurses during home and clinic visits. Messages are simple, consistent, and routine. Messages target issues that affect children at specific stages in their development.
- D.A.R.E.- Drug Abuse resistance education. A partnership between the RCMP and the School Boards to educate children in grades 5 & 6 regarding drugs, gangs and violence.
- Risk Watch- A school based curriculum with 5 age appropriate modules that links teachers with safety professionals. Topics include: motor vehicle safety, fire & burn prevention, choking/ suffocation/ strangulation prevention, poisoning prevention, falls prevention, fire arms injury prevention, bikes and pedestrian safety, and water safety.
- School Curriculum- a variety of safety, injury prevention and wellness topics are covered throughout the school year.
- Babysitting Courses- Available through St. John Ambulance and various recreation programming.
- Home Alone Courses- Available through St. John Ambulance and various recreation programming.
- Safe Families Extravaganza- A fun filled family oriented safety event held in conjunction with Safe Kids Week. Events include a bike safety rodeo, helmet fitting, bike inspections, fire safety house, ident-a-kid, water safety, playground safety, pedestrian safety, static displays with ambulance, police cars and fire engines, and a variety of other displays and activities.
- Block Parents- A community based program where households post a sign in their front window so children know it is a safe place to go for help.
- Ident-i-kid- A finger printing program that help parents keep an up to date record of their Childs' identification.
- RCMP Youth Coordinator- Works with youth in the school system and within the community, including promoting safer, healthier lifestyles.

### Initiatives for Youth 15-24 years:

- S.A.D.D.- Students against drunk driving is a group of highschool students that produce service announcements, advertising and presentations promoting anti drinking and driving.

- Job Safety Skills- Various courses within the high school curriculum discuss safety in the work place.
- RAP Program- A co-op trades program combining work experience and education and job safety for high school students.
- M.A.C.O.Y.- Mayors Advisory Council on Youth. A group of youth working for youth dealing with youth issues. Their current project is to establish a youth centre to provide a safe, fun place for the youth of our communities to gather.
- Staff Training- Pre camp/recreation program training- various facilities offering employment for teens to work with youth offer training programs specific to safety and injury prevention (MacDonald Island Park, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Keyano College)
- SAFTY- Formally called the P.A.R.T.Y. Program, this educational, interactive workshops is for teens with the focus on drinking and driving.
- Job Shadowing- An opportunity for parents to take their grade 9 students to school to gain a better understanding of what goes on at the work place.
- Passport to Safety- the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network is currently looking at the feasibility of bringing this young worker safety program to our community.
- RCMP Youth Coordinator- Works with youth both within the school system and within the community, including promoting safer, healthier lifestyles.

#### Initiatives for Adults 25-64 years:

- Workplace Safety Programs- Most all corporate and small businesses have active safety programs that not only promote safety in the workplace, but also in the transition to home life.
- Keyano College- A variety of courses related to safety and injury prevention are offered through the local college, including occupational safety, injury prevention (fitness, childhood education, safety in the home).
- Service Agencies and Support Groups- There are numerous agencies and groups in the Region that offer health and wellness, injury prevention, and safety courses. (ie SOS, Mental Health Association, Canadian Cancer Association, ...)

#### Initiatives for the Elderly 65+ years:

- Steady As You Go- A community based program educating Seniors on slips, trips and falls, and injury prevention.
- Personal Safety- RCMP offers personal safety classes to seniors in our community
- Golden Years Society- Provides a safe, fun recreation and leisure opportunity for seniors.
- Wood Buffalo Housing and Develop Corporation- Operates a nursing home and 2 seniors housing complexes. Programs and information is made available for personal and home safety.

### Initiatives for Home Safety:

- Neighborhood Watch- A community based program where neighbors look out for neighbors with the focus on safety and anti- vandalism.
- A Million Messages- A comprehensive plan to standardize injury prevention messages given to parents at pre-existing contacts with health professionals. Messages are given by Public Health Nurses during home and clinic visits. Messages are simple, consistent, and routine. Messages target issues that affect children at specific stages in their development.
- Emergency Preparedness- Emergency management provides a prompt and coordinated response to emergency situations requiring a multi-agency response, protecting life, property and the environment.
- Partners In Emergency Preparedness- A community based program that deals with educating the public on being prepared in emergencies.
- Fire Prevention- A variety of fire safety programs and educational resources are available to the community and home owners.
- River Breakup Program- A monitoring program to assess the river's potential to flood, causing an emergency situation in the lower town site.

### Initiatives for the Environment:

- WBEA- The Wood Buffalo Environmental Association partners with numerous community groups and businesses to monitor the air quality and bring awareness and education regarding environmental issues.
- Communities In Bloom- The environment component works with other partners to promote a healthier, safer environment.
- Toxic Round up- A clean up program that rounds up and discards unsafe toxins in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
- Emergency Response Team/ First Responders- Comprised of Suncor, Syncrude and Albian Sands to initiate and implement a plan in the to deal with emergency situations on site and within the community.
- Community Cleanup- The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo partners with community groups and local business to help make our community cleaner and safer.

### Initiatives for Traffic Safety:

- Wood Buffalo Child Passenger Restraint Coalition- Provides awareness, education, and car seat inspections to promote the safe and correct use of child restraints.
- Check Stops- RCMP conduct periodic check stops to enforce the laws of the road.
- S.T.E.P.- This RCMP Strategic Traffic Enforcement Program focuses on seasonal campaigns including buckle up, pedestrian safety, speeding, and drinking and driving.
- Media Campaigns- The local radio station is actively involved with promoting safety, injury prevention and wellness, and provides gift in kind advertising, promotion and awareness campaigns.

- Traffic Safety Hotline- Syncrude Canada currently operates a Traffic Safety Hotline initially intended for people to report unsafe driving habits. Although the focus is meant to be restricted to the work site, many calls are being received for off site issues as well. They are currently working with the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network to establish a community based Traffic Safety Hotline. It is hoped this will be launched in the fall 2005, pending funding.
- Mariana Lake Store- A rural gas station and store recently received recognition locally as well as through the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research for choosing to discontinue the sales of alcohol, although it was a profitable business for them. Their business is located on Highway 63, and with direct access to alcohol mid way through a trip to or from Edmonton, there existed the very real potential for drivers to purchase alcohol and consume it while on the road. It is felt that this move was instrumental in reducing the number of those drinking and driving.
- A.M.A.- The Alberta Motor Association provides awareness and educational information to the public, as well as safe driving courses. They are an active stakeholder on the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network.
- WBSHCN Traffic Safety Taskforce- As a branch of the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network, the purpose of this taskforce is to build community capacity in dealing with issues of road safety. The current project is establishing a community based Traffic Safety Hotline.
- RV Inspections- A free annual program sponsored by community groups and organizations promoting safety on the road.
- ATV Safety Initiative- Community groups and organizations have undertaken the concern of ATV's in our community, and work to educate and promote safe and legal usage.
- OHV Working Group- (Off Highway Vehicles) A group of community stakeholders gather to plan and implement strategic plans regarding the safe and legal usage of motor bikes, pocket rocket bikes, 3 wheelers, quads, and snow mobiles and similar machinery.
- Seat Belt Convincer- A mechanical machine available through the RCMP to demonstrate hands on the value of wearing a seatbelt. This is available throughout the community at various venues.
- Fatal Vision Goggles- The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network purchased these goggles for the local RCMP to use as an educational tool on the dangerous effects of drinking and driving.
- Dangerous Goods Program- In an effort to reduce the serious impact of a traffic incident involving the transport of dangerous goods.

Initiatives for School/ Education Safety:

- AMA (Alberta Motor Association) School Safety Patrol- A Nationally recognized School Safety Patrol program that brings awareness, education and safe crossing of a road way by training students on pedestrian safety.
- Playground Inspection Program- Conducted through Northern Lights Health Region, Environmental Health.
- S.A.S.P.- Students Assisting Students Program is a peer-to-peer mentoring program.
- Anti Bullying Initiatives- Available through the schools in cooperation with community groups and organizations.

- Helmet Safety Program- A partnership with the Northern Lights Health region and the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network to promote safe and correct use of helmets. Municipal summer students provide school visitations, and through out the summer they continually educate and promote trail safety.
- Early Childhood Development Program- This program includes sections on safety, injury prevention and wellness.
- HUB Family Resource Centre- A one stop 'shopping' opportunity to access community resources and meet new people. The Hub encourages early intervention and positive parenting, focusing on fun, safety and wellness.
- RCMP School Resource Officer- Presence in the schools provide awareness and education opportunities.
- Job Safety Skills- Safety and injury prevention education to prepare for a safe work environment.
- Roots of Empathy- Focuses on raising levels of empathy, resulting in more respectful and caring relationships and reduced levels of bullying and aggression, striving to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poor parenting.
- SAFTY Program- Formally called the P.A.R.T.Y. Program. Educational, interactive workshops for teens with the focus on drinking and driving.
- Safe Grads- Each year local High School Students gather in a safe, well supervised area to celebrate their graduation.
- S.A.D.D.- Students against drunk driving. An active group of students produce special service announcements, advertising messages promoting anti drinking and driving, and make presentations to schools and groups.

Initiatives for Occupational Safety:

- Workplace Safety Programs- Most all corporate and small businesses have active safety programs that not only promote safety in the workplace, but also in the transition to home life.
- Off The Job Safety Initiatives- Many larger corporations now have opportunities for employees and their families to participate in safety and injury prevention initiatives, and promote recreation opportunities off the worksite emphasizing safety 24/7.
- Home Plate Safety- A recreation club for Syncrude Employees and their families promoting safe opportunities off the site as well as on.
- Shifting to Wellness- A comprehensive shift work lifestyle training program to deal with issues that result from 24/7 operations.
- Keyano College- A variety of occupational safety courses are offered through the local college.
- Wood Buffalo Regional Safety Committee- This committee is active in identifying regional and trade-specific health and safety training needs. They will also be involved in developing solutions to safety problems in the construction industry, particularly at the local level.
- Oilsands Safety Conference- In conjunction with the annual Oil Sands Trade Show, the Safety Conference focuses on work place safety.

- NAOSH Week- North American Occupational Safety and Health Week promotes occupational health and safety through display, presentations, workshops and keynote speakers. It' success locally continues to grow annually.
- CSSE- Canadian Society of Safety Engineers- Provides workshops, seminars and courses promoting work place health and safety.
- ACSA- Alberta Construction Safety Association provides workshops, seminars and courses promoting work place health and safety.
- Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce- Provides workshops, seminars and courses promoting business health and safety, among other initiatives.

Initiatives for Recreation & Leisure Safety:

- Lids For Kids- A winter safety program through Vista Ridge Ski Hill which distributes helmets, knee pads and wrist guards to youth on the ski hill. Local business and organizations contribute by donating the equipment.
- Helmet Safety Program- An education program offered in partnership between the Northern Lights Health Region and local groups, organizations and funders to promote correct helmet usage and provide lower income families with free helmets.
- Search and Rescue- A community based group that provides training, awareness, and skills for safety and injury prevention.
- ATV Safety- Community based groups promote education and awareness of safety and ATV use, and educate the public on the legalities and liabilities.
- Minor Sports Coaching Program- (hockey, soccer, baseball) Provides teaching components on injury reduction and first aid in sports.
- Safe Families Extravaganza- A fun filled family oriented safety event held in conjunction with Safe Kids Week. Events include a bike safety rodeo, helmet fitting, bike inspections, fire safety house, ident-a-kid, water safety, playground safety, pedestrian safety, static displays with ambulance, police cars and fire engines, and a variety of other displays and activities.
- Safe Kids Week- The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network participates as a partner, promoting the annual themes related to childhood safety.
- Be Fit For Life Centre- Promoting safety and injury prevention through health and wellness.
- Water Safety- Courses offered through the YMCA and Centennial Pool.
- Vista Ridge Ski Patrol- Trained ski hill supervisors to promote safe winter sports (ski, snow board, tubing)
- Thin Ice Program- Educating the public on the dangers of thin ice.

Aboriginal Safety Initiatives:

- Nistawoyou Friendship Centre- Offers recreation and leisure programs in a safe and healthy environment.

- Athabasca Tribal Council- Provides aboriginal learning opportunities, particularly in the areas of work place safety and life skill development.
- Bike Rodeo- RCMP promoted safe biking and helmet usage during visits to rural communities within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- Health Promotion- Health professionals visit the rural communities within the Municipality promoting injury prevention, health and wellness.
- Keyano College- offers occupational safety courses in the rural communities to promote safety in the work place.
- F.C.S.S.- Workers within the remote rural communities work with residents on a number of issues, including safety, injury prevention and wellness.
- Rural Community Recreation Groups- Rural communities within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo provide programs and a safe place to learn and play, ie Fort Chipewyan, Janvier and Conklin community associations.

#### Safety Initiatives for Persons with Disabilities:

- Salvation Army START Program- Providing opportunities for adults with developmental delays in a safe environment.
- McMann Centre- Providing opportunities for children with developmental delays in a safe environment.
- Choices- An employment-training program for people with disabilities, promoting work place safety.
- Housing- Safe, secure, affordable housing is made available to those with the greatest need.
- P.D.D.- Persons with Developmental Disabilities provides programming and educational opportunities.

#### Other Safety Initiatives:

- Wellness Smorgasbord- A community wide event promoting safety, injury prevention, health and wellness.
- Halloween Safety- Support and safety resource information is provided to groups initiating Halloween activities.
- The Craze- A family oriented, alcohol free New Years Eve celebration, promoting entertainment and activities in a safe environment. Helmets are mandatory for on ice activities.
- Let's Talk Wellness- A weekly radio talk show combined with newspaper articles and other advertising promoting health, wellness and safety education.
- Ministerial Association- Provides support and lifestyle counseling.
- St. John Ambulance- Provides community based injury prevention programs (ie Babysitting, Home Alone) as well as first aid and emergency response courses to varying degrees of complexity.

- Keyano College- Provides learning opportunities for safety, wellness and injury prevention.
- BRZ Business Watch- Working to provide a safer, cleaner down town core, businesses are working together and with the RCMP to try to deal with drug, traffic, cleanliness, and homelessness issues.
- Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network- In partnership with community groups, organizations, business and the community at large, the Network facilitates the sharing of information, resource building, educating the public on injury control initiatives and strategies, and promotes safe and healthy living 24/7.
- Northern Lights Regional Health Centre- The Health Promotion Department is a major contributor for promotion, resources and funding for injury prevention and wellness messages.
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fire Prevention Branch, Emergency Services, Community Services)- These departments represent a key source of resources, funding and opportunities in bringing safety, injury prevention and wellness awareness to the community.
- RCMP Community Initiatives- The RCMP works pro-actively with other community groups to promote a safer and healthier community.
- Interagency meetings- Numerous groups and organizations meet monthly to discuss community initiatives and issues. This is a significant way to share and promote information.
- United Way Campaign- A funding group dedicated to supporting local organizations who support our community to make it a healthier, safer place to live.
- Mock Disaster Training- Major community stakeholders gather to respond to a mock disaster to ensure the emergency response system is effective and updated.
- Canadian Rangers/ Junior Canadian Rangers- Within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Fort Chipewyan recruits and trains people in this remote Northern Community to provide a military presence for the Canadian Forces and are significant resources for emergency preparedness.
- Emergency Community Response program- This Municipal/ community based program assists residents when disasters hit, i.e. forest fire evacuees and flood victims.

### **#3 Programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promote safety for vulnerable groups.**

Fort McMurray is a fast growing, 'big money' town with a large number of the work force young adult males to middle age men. This includes single and married males, as well as the 'shadow population' living in work camps and hotels. Through collaboration and data collection with the Municipality, RCMP, Health Region, community service groups, business, and industry it has been identified that this represents a large portion of the region's high-risk population. This is evident through traffic behaviors, addictions to drugs/ alcohol and gambling, poor mental health, attempted and completed suicide rates, and aggressive behavior.

Another high-risk area identifies both male and female who work shift work (12 hours/day, 6 days straight, including day shift and night shift). This can lead to mental health and physical well-being issues. As well, often times both parents work and this has lead to a greater number of dysfunctional families, mental health issues, and unsupervised children and youth.

#### Violence prevention (intentional injuries):

Great efforts are being undertaken by a number of community groups to deal with preventative measures including programming, support groups, resources and information sharing, as well as counseling for individuals (adults and youth) and families. Because many of the identified high-risk individuals work within industry and the business sector, community support systems are sensitive to scheduling and availability of workers to maximize the level of assistance required.

- KINCAPP- Kinsmen/ Kinette Child Abuse Prevention Program host an annual fundraiser golf tournament to raise funds to support local Child Abuse Prevention programs. Funding is often the limitation to implementing programs and this is a pro-active, very successful initiative.
- Unity House- A safe house for women and children fleeing abusive relationships. There are numerous programs and workshops provided to promote a safer and healthier lifestyle.
- S.O.S.- Some Other Solutions for Crisis Prevention deals with mental health related issues, many of which affect a safe and healthy lifestyle. They produce a variety of resource materials and make it available to community organizations and the public at large.
- Take Back The Night- An annual candlelight walk demonstrating solidarity for a safer community, helping to raise awareness for preventative safety measures.
- Family Violence Team- An RCMP based program to work with violence within the family, providing protection, education and support to the individuals involved.
- Victim Services- A community based program to work with victims of violence, educating the public, and providing support to those involved.

#### Suicide prevention (self-inflicted injuries):

Although the numbers of attempted and completed suicides within the Municipality has reduced over the last few years, it still remains a significant concern, having identified the high risk group as predominately the younger male population. This also represents the highest numbers of individuals accessing the Suicide Prevention Hotline, which is operated by Some Other Solutions (S.O.S.).

- Twisted Mister- A mental health prevention program for adult males through (SOS).
- Self Harm Programs- This is a growing concern in the schools so a program has been formalized to provide awareness, education and resource information.

- SOS- Some Other Solutions for Crisis Prevention operates a volunteer hotline to assist those in need. They are currently embarking on a 'Twisted Mister' campaign to promote positive mental health among adult males. They also produce a variety of resource materials and make it available to community organizations and the public at large.

Safety Initiatives aiming at "High risk-groups":

The homeless and 'near homeless' population in Fort McMurray is considerably high. Many people have come to the Region with the false promise of lots of work and great wages. Unfortunately, with the high cost of living and the illusion of an abundance of great paying jobs, these numbers have been on a steady increase. As well, many service industry workers are classed as the 'working poor', with expensive rent and accommodations, availability, and the high cost and availability of childcare. There are many organizations that provide support and resources to those with the greatest need, and more alternatives are constantly being researched.

- Salvation Army Mat Program- Overnight, temporary accommodations for absolute high-risk homeless individuals to provide food, a mat, and a warm place to sleep.
- Community Organizations- Including: Wood Buffalo Aids Society, Cancer Society, Tobacco Reduction Coalition, Mental Health Society, AADAC -Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, Some Other Solutions, Association for Community Living, Heart and Stroke Foundation ... to name just a few- these are all community based organizations that provide awareness, education and resources to a specific 'at risk' group.
- Angel Manor- Offers affordable housing, programs, life skills and support offered to young pregnant moms, and those young moms with newborns.
- Coats For Kids- Providing warm clothing for kids and their families, as well as individuals. This is a pro-active program provided by a group of volunteers with the support of the School Districts, business and the Salvation Army.
- Homelessness Initiative- This is an annual review of the homeless situation and re-assessment of what initiatives need to be undertaken to develop the Community Plan on Homelessness. This is a municipally driven program that issues funding to groups for the implementation of initiatives as identified in the Community Plan on Homelessness.
- Soup Kitchens- Operated by the United Church and the Salvation Army with numerous volunteers. Wholesome, hot meals are prepared for the homeless and near homeless population and those in need. It provides them a safe, warm place to eat, rest and seek resource assistance.
- Pastew Place- A detox and intervention program for substance abuse.
- Mark Amy Treatment Centre- Providing holistic addictions treatment in a health environment.
- Fort MacKay Wellness Centre- Providing prevention, wellness and lifestyle programs to residents in this remote community within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- RCMP Youth Coordinator- Works with youth both within the school and in the community, particularly with drug and substance abuse education and reinforcement.
- Centre Of Hope- A drop in centre for 'at risk' people providing resources and support.
- Fellowship Baptist Church- Is pro-active in working with homeless individuals, 'at risk' people, and youth intervention programs.

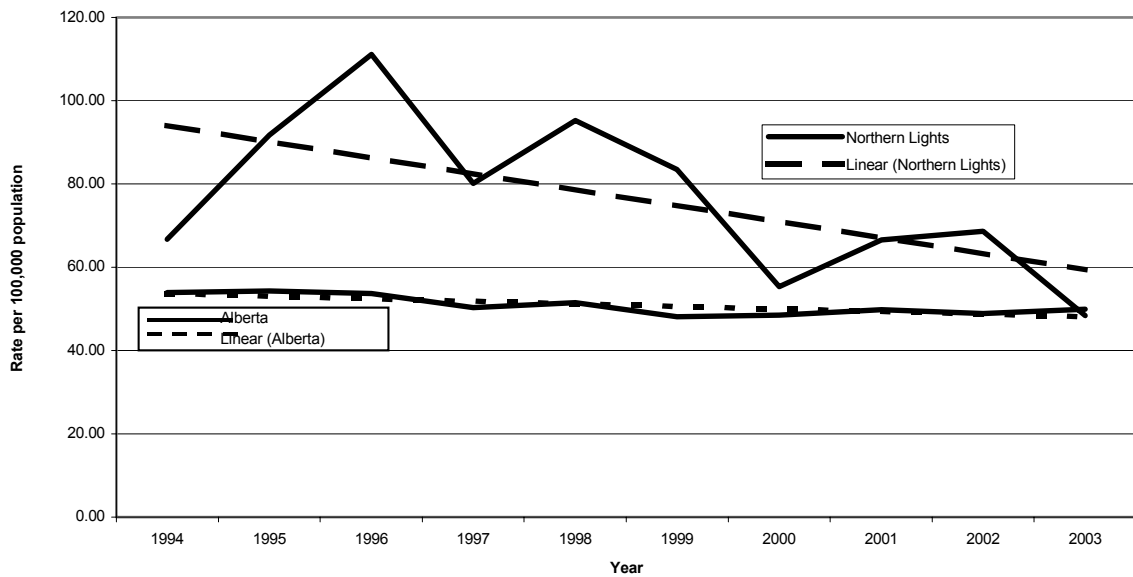
**#4 Programs that document the frequencies and causes of injuries.**

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network monitors the frequency and cause of mortality and morbidity by accessing data through the Alberta Centre For Injury Control And Research, as the Network does not have the expertise and resources within the organization. The WBSHCN then works closely with the Northern Lights Health Region in reviewing injury data then establishes goals and identifies areas of priorities and available resources.

The tables below represent the most recent data available from the Alberta Centre For Injury Control And Research.

Northern Lights Health Region- Injury Data						
Year	Deaths		Hospital Admissions		Emerg Dept Visits	
	Number	Rate/100,000 population	Number	Rate/100,000 population	Number	Rate/100,000 population
1994	27	66.69	1108	2826.9		
1995	40	91.78	998	2510.1		
1996	40	111.04	1023	2721.8		
1997	31	80.18	1113	2915.7		
1998	47	95.17	1133	2857.7	10129	16464.9
1999	31	83.43	1007	2631.9	11515	18541.1
2000	31	55.32	941	2239.7	11930	18773.8
2001	35	66.56	1037	2376.7	11650	17933.7
2002	43	68.63	978	2086.1	12837	18631.6
2003	35	48.32	1020	2093.5	13947	19504.5

**Injury Death Rates- Alberta and Northern Lights Health Region, 1994-2003**  
(age-standardized, rate per 100,000 population)



The regional rates (deaths, hospital admissions and E.D. visits) presented in all of the data from ACICR are based on a patient's postal code and not the location of the service (not the number of admissions at your hospitals or visits seen in your emergency departments). This is particularly important to your health region especially for Fort McMurray as I believe there is a large "temporary/transient" population. Therefore, the population rates are not **truly** representative of the complete Fort McMurray injury activity.

Method to calculate the rates:

- Each patient activity (i.e. hospital admission or emerg visit) is "assigned" back to the patient's health region based on their postal code.
- Population is based a patient's postal code as on their Alberta Health Card. This is done as it is difficult to count transient populations.

## **#5 Evaluation measures to assess their programs, processes and the effects of change.**

The Executive of the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network participates annually in a business planning session that includes goal planning. This working document is reviewed with the Network membership for additional feedback, then reviewed quarterly to measure progress and outcomes.

As part of the continuing process, the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network completes an evaluation following each initiative, as well as ongoing assessments of long-term projects. The information is compiled, recorded and used for future programming and goal planning.

Feedback is obtained both written and orally from participants, and in the case of youth initiatives, feedback is obtained from both youth and parents. Input is provided on a continuing basis from the planning committee and members of the Network.

To date, the feedback received has indicated that the Network has played a significant role in raising awareness in injury prevention and wellness, and is contributing to making an impact on behavior change. This is most evident in the Helmet Safety Awareness initiatives and the Safe Families Extravaganza. The formal evaluation has provided some very significant feedback for the scope and direction of the program.

In light of the recent growth and changes within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo over the last few years, it is necessary to once again undertake a formal review of the current understanding and impact of the safety and wellness environment and the impact within our community. The anticipated date to initiate the survey is in the winter of 2006.

## #6 Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks.

The Executive of the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network has made the commitment to send a delegate to a National conference annually, and to an international conference every 4 years, pending financial capabilities. Although at one time representatives from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo participated more frequently in international conferences, funding has limited the more recent access to international opportunities. To date, a designate participates annually at the national conference level, promoting networking and bringing back a great many resources to assist with local initiatives.

- Study visits:
  - 1993 Dr. Leif Svanstrom
  - 1994 Dr. Leif Svanstrom
  
- Participation in Safe Community conferences:
  - Harstad Norway (1994)
  - Fort McMurray, Alberta Canada (1995)
  - Hume City and la Trobe Valley (1996)
  - Rotterdam, Netherlands (1998)
  - Medicine Hat, Alberta Canada (1999)
  - Rainy River, Canada (2002)
  - Estonia (2004)
  - Perth Ontario, Canada (2004)
  - Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada (2005)
  
- Hosting Safe Community Conferences:
  - Fourth International Safe Community Conference, June 1995
  
- Hosting “Traveling Seminars”:
  - 1995, various
  - 2004, Northern Lights Health region was host to the Canadian Injury Prevention and Control Curriculum
  
- Other:
  - 1993, 3rd Annual National Conference, Social Marketing in Public, Clearwater Beach Florida. Presentation by Lynda Watson and Malynda Wheeler.
  - 1994, Fourth Annual National Conference, Social Marketing in Public Health. Presented by Lynda Watson and Malynda Wheeler.
  - 1995, Fourth International Conference on safe Communities, presentation by Dr. Tee Guidotti, Lynda Watson and Malynda Wheeler.
  - 1997, building a Safe Community Conference, Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Key- note speaker Malynda Wheeler.
  - 2000, Canadian Conference on Injury Prevention, Kanaskis Canada
  - 2001, Canadian Conference on Injury Prevention, Edmonton Canada
  - 2002, Safe Community designation through Safe Communities Foundation Canada
  - 2002, 2004 Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research Network Meeting, Edmonton
  - 2004, Aboriginal Injury Prevention Conference, Winnipeg Canada
  - 2004, Making In Roads Traffic Safety Conference, Edmonton Canada
  - 2004, Safe Community Conference in Perth Canada, presentation by Mary Johnson and Nancy Stammers on developing partnerships and collaborations
  - Ongoing, Network Member, Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research
  - Ongoing, Community Partner of Safe Kids Canada
  - 2005, Founding Member, Alberta Injury Control Alliance
  - 2005, Safe Community Conference in Halifax Canada, panel presentation on fundraising, participation by Nancy Stammers

## CONCLUSION

The Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network is committed to fostering the promotion of safer and healthier communities within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The ongoing development of partnerships, the collaborating efforts among community organizations and business, combined with the knowledge that the nature of this transient community and its' fast paced growth are causing significant challenges to the safety and wellness of its' residents, has ignited a renewed concern and motivation to be proactive in enhancing positive community development.

This report briefly outlines those initiatives that are currently being undertaken. However, with the implementation of the Safety and Wellness Survey coming this winter 2006, the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network will gain valuable information to re-asses the needs and direction future initiatives must take. The outcomes of this survey will be reflected in the annual goal planning session that the Network Executive undertakes.

It is through the significant financial stakeholder contributions of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Northern Lights Health Region, Suncor, Syncrude and Albian Sands, as well as major funding dollars through the Provincial Community Initiatives Program and the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research that the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network is able to continue their work in promoting safety and wellness. Ongoing funding will have a significant impact in the direction of the Network. As awareness and the positive reputation of the Network increases, so does the opportunity for funding. This in itself is proving to be a good source of feedback with our increased funding dollars.

Collaborating efforts will continue to be the key factor in the motivation and success of the work that the Wood Buffalo Safe/ Healthy Community Network undertakes, not only at the local level, but regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally as well. We sincerely look forward to being re-designated as a Safe Community by the World Health Organization, as it demonstrates our commitment to the international cause of promoting safer communities for everyone in which to live, learn, work and play.